

of Moscow, appears to have deserted ornithology altogether, and to be immersed in literary pursuits. The splendid collection of birds and eggs which he made in the Ural, and presented to the Museum of Moscow, lies neglected and in disorder, packed away indiscriminately in boxes, cupboards, and drawers; and many of them are without even a sheet of paper to keep out the dust, or to protect them from moths. I tried unsuccessfully to purchase this unique collection, to save it from destruction. In St. Petersburg, Von Schrenk has, for the time being, forsaken ornithology for the more popular charms of ethnography. The ornithological curator at the museum, Russow, is an enthusiastic field-ornithologist, and is rapidly bringing the chaos of birds in that establishment into excellent order, and will doubtless do good work in the future. St. Petersburg has also an excellent amateur ornithologist in Bogdanoff. At Dorpatt, Von Middendorff has retired, both from the University and from ornithology, to his ancestral estates, and is writing learned treatises on the breeding of horses and cattle. Prjevalsky is an excellent collector, but makes no pretensions to a scientific study of ornithology; and Severtzoff, though he has, as we all know, done good work, has followed too closely the steps of the elder Brehm to satisfy the requirements of modern scientific ornithologists, who aim at hitting the happy medium between "lumpers" and "splitters," but are nevertheless oftentimes sorely puzzled to know on which side of an incipient species to draw the line.

[To be continued.]

XIV.—On the Members of the Genus *Gymnoglaux*.

By GEORGE N. LAWRENCE.

DR. GUNDLACH has kindly sent me a specimen of the Owl obtained by him in Porto Rico, which he described under the name of *Gymnoglaux krugii*. He writes to me that he now considers it to be "the veritable *Strix nudipes*, Daud."; and in this opinion I think he is correct. Comparing it with a specimen of the Owl from St. Thomas, which I named *G.*

newtoni, and which has been considered of late to be *G. nudipes*, Daud., I find them strikingly unlike, differing in appearance even more than the latter does from the Cuban species. Consequently the name *G. newtoni* must be restored for the bird from St. Croix and St. Thomas.

There being, in my opinion, three well-marked species of the genus *Gymnoglaux*, and having specimens of each, I think it may be of interest to have their characteristics defined.

† 1. GYMNOGLAUX NUDIPES (Daud.), Tr. d'Orn. ii. p. 199.

Gymnoglaux krugii, Gundl. Jour. f. Orn. 1874, p. 315.

Male. Upper plumage clear dark rufous, with a few small obscure pale markings on the upper part of the back; the scapulars are crossed with whitish bars, which are tinged with rufous and edged with black; front of a lighter rufous, crossed with waving lines of brown; lores and superciliaries of a pale rufous white; ruff dark brown at the bases of the feathers, their ends white; middle tail-feathers and outer webs of the others rufous brown, mottled with nearly obsolete darker markings; the outer webs of the outer feathers have a few irregular bars of pale rufous, the inner webs are dark brown; middle and larger wing-coverts blackish brown, ending with rufous, and having subterminal white spots on their outer webs; the quills on their outer webs are dull rufous brown, indented with white spots, the inner webs are dark hair-brown; the under plumage is whitish, closely marked on each feather with shaft-stripes of dark brown, and crossed on both webs with narrow waving lines of paler rufous brown; thighs and feathers of the tarsi for half their length light rufous, distinctly barred with blackish brown; bill whitish horn-colour; feet pale brownish yellow.

Hab. Porto Rico.

† 2. GYMNOGLAUX NEWTONI, Lawr. Ann. N.Y. Lyc. viii. p. 258.

Gymnoglaux nudipes, A. & E. Newton, Ibis, 1859, p. 64, pl. i.; Scl. et Salv. P. Z. S. 1868, p. 328.

Male? The plumage above (of my specimen from St. Thomas) is of a dull rufous, with narrow, irregular, rather indistinct markings of brown; and broader ones of pale rufous,

the latter colour becoming whitish on the sides of the neck ; front and superciliaries dull white ; ruff and around the eyes dark reddish brown, the ruff tipped with a few white feathers ; the scapulars are largely marked with white at their ends ; middle tail-feathers and outer webs of the others dull rufous brown, with indistinct irregular bars of pale rufous ; inner webs brown, barred with dull rufous white ; the quills have their outer webs light brown, indented with whitish spots, the inner webs dark brown, crossed with nearly obsolete paler bars ; the feathers of the throat are white at the base, barred at their ends with light rufous ; the feathers of the breast are whitish, with shaft-stripes of dark reddish brown and waving cross bars of a lighter shade ; the upper part of the abdomen and the sides are sparingly marked with the longitudinal stripes and cross bars, the middle of the abdomen dull white and immaculate ; thighs and tarsi, for half their length, very pale rufous white, barred with narrow light brown markings ; upper mandible dark horn-colour, except the culmen, which, with the under mandible, is yellowish ; tarsus light brown.

Hab. St. Croix and St. Thomas.

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Gymnoglaux nudipes, Lembeye, Gundlach, and others.

Male. The plumage above is dark brown, the back and wing-coverts distinctly spotted with white, the spots are largest on the scapulars and wing-coverts ; tail brown, with a few dull white spots on the inner webs of the lateral feathers ; primaries umber-brown, with rufous white marks on the outer webs ; under plumage light greyish rufous ; the feathers of the breast, upper part of the abdomen, and the sides are marked with longitudinal stripes of dark brown, and their ends narrowly edged with light brown ; lower part of abdomen free from stripes ; thighs brown, mottled with pale rufous ; bill dark horn-colour, the culmen and end of under mandible yellowish : tarsi and toes yellow.

Hab. Cuba.

The features by which the species may be distinguished readily are given below :—

1. *G. nudipes*.—Dark brown above; all the feathers of the under surface striped and barred, giving to these parts a general dark appearance; front rufous; tarsi feathered for half their length, and of a rufous colour, with brown bands. Length $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches, wing $6\frac{1}{2}$, tail $3\frac{3}{4}$, tarsus $1\frac{1}{2}$.

2. *G. newtoni*.—Above of a much lighter rufous than *G. nudipes*, and less densely striped and barred below; front white; the abdomen immaculate; tarsi feathered for half their length with whitish feathers tinged with rufous. Length 8 inches, wing $6\frac{1}{4}$, tail $3\frac{1}{2}$, tarsus $1\frac{5}{16}$.

3. *G. lawrencii*.—Brown above, spotted with white; the shaft-stripes on the under plumage heavy, and the webs without the cross markings, but the ends of the feathers edged with light brown; lower part of abdomen without markings; front brown; tarsi bare of feathers. Length $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches, wing $5\frac{7}{8}$, tail $3\frac{1}{4}$, tarsus $1\frac{1}{4}$.

[Our knowledge of the species of the genus *Gymnoglaux* is so limited, and specimens are so scarce in collections, that we welcome any information tending to throw light upon the relationship of the species to one another. Still we cannot quite accept Mr. Lawrence's present solution of the question as to the number of species as final. When we proposed the name *G. lawrencii* (P. Z. S. 1868, p. 327) we took the opportunity of stating that a comparison of a specimen from St. Thomas with Daudin's type specimen of *G. nudipes*, from Puerto Rico, still extant in the Paris Museum, convinced us of their identity. The diversity of the colouring of the plumage in some species of Owls is so notorious, that it is very probable that greater variation in this respect may exist in *G. nudipes* than Mr. Lawrence gives it credit for possessing. If so, *G. newtoni* and *G. krugii* may both be *G. nudipes* after all. That Puerto Rico is inhabited by two species of *Gymnoglaux* we hesitate to believe; but should this prove to be the case, the name to be reinstated, according to our view, will be *G. krugii*, and not *G. newtoni*.—EDD.]